

Rebuilding Lives PACT Team Initiative

RLPTI Community Report published by Community Shelter Board

February 2007

Chalmers P. Wylie Veterans
Administration
Outpatient Clinic

Columbus
Metropolitan
Housing Authority

Columbus
Neighborhood
Health Centers

Community Housing
Network

Community Shelter Board

Franklin County
Department of Job and
Family Services

Southeast, Inc.



RLPTI team members discuss client needs at their daily morning meeting.



Bryden Road apartments in central Columbus.



Ponderosa apartments in northeast Columbus.



White Birch Crescent apartments on the east side of Franklin County.

The Rebuilding Lives PACT Team Initiative has connected 139 persons to private landlords at a variety of sites in Franklin County.

High ImPACT

RLPTI housing program is model for help and hope

Twenty years ago, the fastest-growing city in the Midwest galvanized around an audacious vision: to combat – and eventually eliminate – homelessness. Early on, Columbus, Ohio, did well just supporting two emergency shelters. Less than two decades later, formerly homeless people have settled into nearly 800 apartments in urban neighborhoods and suburban enclaves, and raised \$8 million annually to get people off the streets and into shelters, treatment or permanent housing.

All the while, the Community Shelter Board (CSB) has been at the center of progress, recognized as a national leader in pioneering permanent solutions to eradicate homelessness. Critical to the community's success is a strong public-private partnership of the City of Columbus, Franklin County Commissioners, United Way, and business and foundation leaders working closely with exceptional non-profit organizations.

Columbus' prominence resulted in being selected one of 11 cities to pilot a next-level model for permanent, supportive housing.

Results Snapshot

86% of clients remain in stable housing

89% of clients now receive income

330 cumulative years of homelessness have ended

Housing and Hope

Results of the PACT Team Approach

- ❖ 86% of clients have remained in housing for one year or more
- ❖ 3 alcohol and substance abuse support groups have been established
- ❖ 108 units of supportive housing have been created
- ❖ Clients typically receive benefits in less than 6 weeks, reduced from previous waits of up to 2 years
- ❖ Bureau of Disability Determination created a unit to work specifically with homeless persons
- ❖ 89% of clients now receive income
- ❖ Clients report a higher quality of life

*From Final Evaluation Report
by Community Research Partners,
January 2007*



John L. lived on the streets for 20 years before the RLPTI program provided a place to live and medical services.

Lower Crime

Before RLPTI Housing		After RLPTI Housing	
Number of Incidences		Number of Incidences	Change
73	Male	25	▼ 66%
20	Female	4	▼ 80%
93	Total	29	▼ 69%

Criminal offenses have decreased 69% after clients were placed in RLPTI permanent supportive housing

Rising to the challenge

Funded by the federal government, the project in Columbus was named the Rebuilding Lives PACT Team Initiative (RLPTI). The experiment was aimed at the most intransigent and intractable cases – persons with severe mental disabilities, including schizophrenia, who experience chronic homelessness. In every city, these homeless people are disenfranchised and need a wide array of services beyond a place to live. The demonstration project posed major social science questions: Is it possible for communities to integrate social service, housing, health care and entitlement programs throughout a variety of organizations and across professional disciplines to better serve homeless people? Could service providers break out of their silos to work as one team on behalf of individual clients?

The answer in Columbus is a resounding yes. Since March 2004, the PACT Team has connected 139 persons to housing, mental health specialists and physical health services. All but 10 clients are receiving benefits, including disability and veterans' payments. Moreover, 86% of them, despite long-term histories of homelessness, were still in their housing after one year, and 20% had managed to avoid eviction and other setbacks to keep their apartments for more than two years.

A unique collaboration

Most people with severe mental illness receive treatment through a traditional system of care provided by individual case managers. In contrast, the PACT Team model requires multidisciplinary staff to work as a single team to deliver treatment, rehabilitation and supportive services that help people live in a community.

Agencies throughout Franklin County banded together to launch the model program, forming a community treatment team that included specialists in mental health, physical health, housing, employment, substance abuse treatment, and veterans' services. (See "Community Collaborators.")

The term PACT, or Program of Assertive Community Treatment, is a clinical model used for individuals whose severe and persistent mental health issues result in a disability or problems maintaining employment, self-care and personal relationships. Offered alone, housing or medication is insufficient to improve the quality of their lives. Financial support, money-management services, transportation, crisis intervention and supported housing must be offered in combination to end the cycle of homelessness.

How it worked

RLPTI started work in 2003 united around the Housing First philosophy that permanent housing is the first step toward recovery from chronic homelessness. After individuals are in a stable place to live, they can be linked to services that will prevent a reoccurrence of homeless.

Over the last two years, about a dozen PACT Team members met on a daily basis to identify and serve the needs of each person who had been referred to the program from emergency shelters and social service agencies. Of all clients referred to the PACT Team, 70% were male, 68% were black, and almost a quarter (23%) had been in the military. Clients were first assessed to ensure they met

the criteria for admission: severe disabilities and chronic homelessness. Half of the clients who entered the program had major mood disorders, and 26% were diagnosed with schizophrenic disorders. Two of every three (68%) had a secondary diagnosis of alcohol and/or drug dependency.

Every day, specialists around the table would monitor the progress of each client. *What did you observe about John's behavior following the medication change? Does Sarah need an appointment to check on her blood pressure? How can we speed up Dave's disability payment so he can pay his rent? What do we do for Shawna now that she's been released from the hospital after the overdose?* And, every day, a member of



PACT Team members give clients more individual attention, resulting in greater client satisfaction.

Participant Profiles

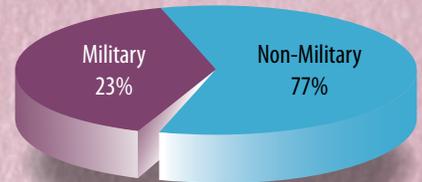
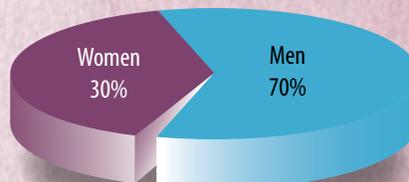
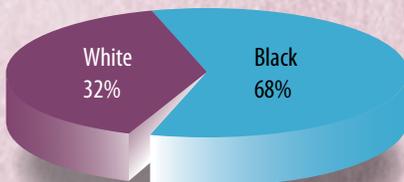
John D.

John is in his early 40s and had been homeless for more than 15 months after being incarcerated. He was estranged from his seven children, and suffered from major depression, substance abuse, diabetes and asthma. Since he was housed more than two years ago, he has received medication for his mental and physical ailments, SSI benefits, and a new set of dentures. John has nearly completed training to become a peer specialist, and he's achieved his goal of re-establishing contact with his children.

Tanya K.

Tanya suffers from bi-polar disorder. Now in her mid-50s, she has been homeless repeatedly due to her illness and lack of income. Since becoming part of RLPTI, she has been housed for more than two years, acquired SSI benefits and health assistance. She is now able to care for her grandchildren and is preparing to move to less intensive support and her own housing.

RLPTI Clients



Community Collaborators

- ❖ Chalmers P. Wylie Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic

veterans' case management and evaluation

- ❖ Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority

housing services

- ❖ Columbus Neighborhood Health Centers

medical and health services

- ❖ Community Housing Network

housing and housing retention services

- ❖ Community Shelter Board

project coordination

- ❖ Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services

benefits enrollment

- ❖ Southeast, Inc.

mental health services

For more information:

Dave Davis
Project Coordinator
Community Shelter Board
115 W. Main Street, LL
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 221-9195
www.csb.org

the PACT Team took responsibility for the next action to make their clients better and encourage them to take one more step up on the ladder from hopelessness to health.

Improving quality of life

People accustomed to living outdoors or in shelters find it hard to access services, even when they are available. They don't have permanent addresses to receive information about benefits, lack phones to be notified about appointments, and frequently transportation to services can be a problem. An important test for the PACT Team Initiative is how well it improved clients' experiences.

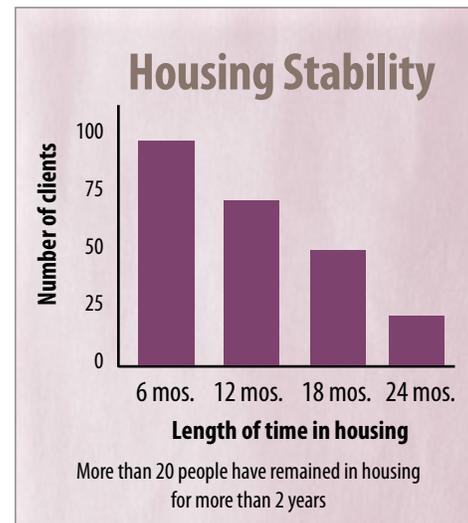
Prior to living in RLPTI supportive housing, 65% of clients interviewed were living in shelters and 10% on the streets. After being enrolled in the program, they reported an improved quality of life. Most valued receiving help in applying for benefits, seeing a doctor more often, abusing substances less, and feeling safer.

Agency partnerships

Agency partners mostly agreed that the PACT Team approach reduced fragmentation in delivering seamless services to clients. The process of working together to identify needs and coordinating action resulted in more individual attention to clients. Partner agencies offered ideas for improvement. They cited federal laws, or agency restrictions such as one agency's limited hours of operation, that need to change to offer a fully integrated system of delivery. They voiced a desire for better communication and cooperation among agencies.

Recent advances

Work is ongoing to reach new achievements every day. Last fall, United Way



awarded RLPTI a grant for \$39,000 to expand a health clinic for integrated mental and physical health services at Southeast, Inc. Franklin County Veterans Service Commission is providing up to six months of rental subsidies to help former military personnel while they await their veterans' benefits.

RLPTI's future

As a result of the Rebuilding Lives PACT Team Initiative, the quality of life for formerly homeless persons has improved, agencies are working closer together, and service systems have started to change. Based on these encouraging initial benefits, CSB is asking local leaders and policymakers in Washington, D.C., to continue funding RLPTI. Although support is secure through September 2007, CSB and affordable housing advocates urge lawmakers to sustain the investment beyond 2008. Supportive housing is a proven, cost-effective alternative to expensive psychiatric hospitalization and jails. Most important, by reducing homelessness, Columbus will be a better place to live for everyone.